



THE

JACG

NEWSLETTER

JACG

THE JERSEY ATARI COMPUTER GROUP

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APRIL 1988

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

COMPUTE! caputs coverage

Halfway through my COMPUTE! magazine subscription, I find that I need no longer need read the magazine for ATARI 8-bit reviews, type-in programs, advertising, editorial comment, and articles. With no fanfare, no announcement to subscribers, no mention at all...the May, 1988 issue of COMPUTE! has NO ATARI 8-bit coverage at all. If you read the editorial on page 4 of the issue carefully, you will see mentioned (for specific coverage): Commodore 8-bits, ATARI ST, Amiga, Apple II, IBM and compatible, and Macintosh...no ATARI 8-bit. Coverage ceased without a word.

I wonder what rationale COMPUTE! Publications has used to drop coverage...it certainly can't be imbedded user base, or lack of continuing software development and availability. Perhaps I perceive a slight stench wafting northward from COMPUTE! Publication's Greensboro, NC headquarters!!! I subscribed to COMPUTE! because it DID cover the ATARI 8-bit computers...I WILL write to them and give them my opinion of what they have (or should I say, are not doing). Readership...feel free to do likewise!

On another front...miracle of miracles...ANALOG has re-surfaced from its new home in California! Furthermore...the disk version followed by only a few days the magazine-only version. I certainly hope that their house is now in order, and that their continued existence can be counted upon.

Please note comments in other articles in this NEWSLETTER regarding 16-bit meeting participation and NEWSLETTER contributions. The participation/contribution ratio based upon percent of membership, find 16-bitters lacking. Please consider taking up the slack and make our meetings and NEWSLETTER more representative.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 10, 1988	Ken Gordon Computer Show
April 23-24, 1988	Pittsburgh Atarifest
April 23-24, 1988	Trenton Computer Show
May 1, 1988	LI ACE Minifest
May 14, 1988	JACG Monthly Meeting



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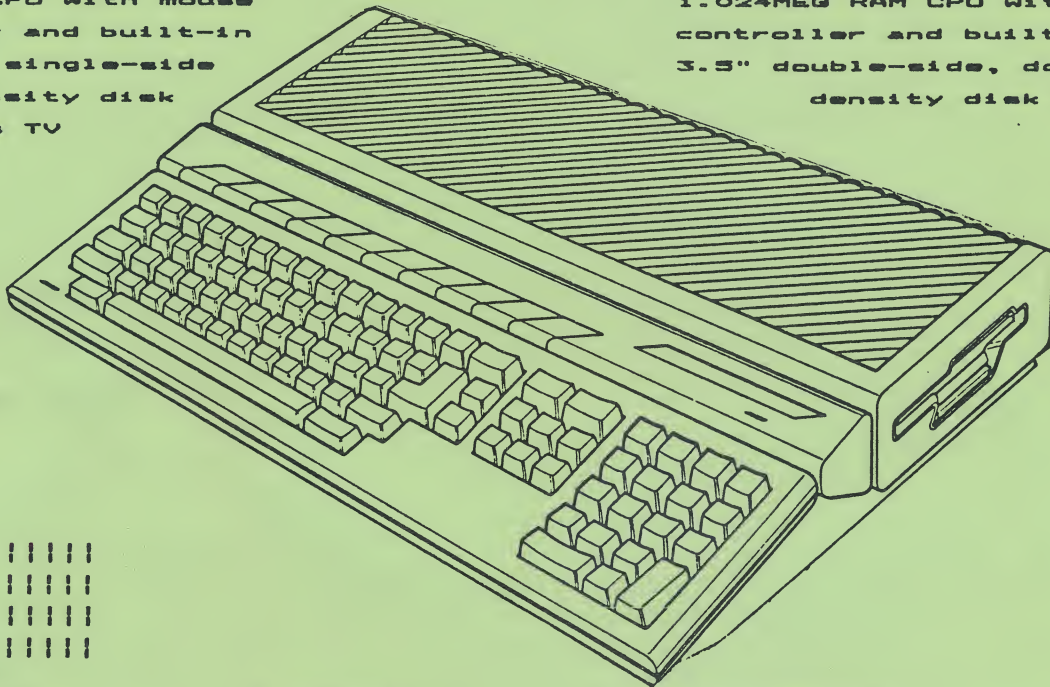
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Doug Van Hook

This month we contacted Kris Holtegaard who will give a presentation at our May 14th meeting. Kris is a member of the 'ol Hacker's Atari Club which is located in Selden, New York. Kris is an expert on SPARTADOS, and an avid 8-Bit Atari User! He will also present TEXTPRO, which is a Public Domain word processor with more power than ATARIWRITER PLUS!

After viewing Kris' two hour taped presentation on SPARTADOS, I'm going to take the plunge and buy a copy myself. In fact, if I hit the Lottery, I might consider a Hard Drive for my 8-Bit before buying an ST! We've become so hooked on new releases for 16-Bit Ataris that we've fallen behind on improved 8-Bit technology. Kris will bring copies of SPARTADOS to the meeting which he will sell for about \$30.00.

TEXTPRO is no ordinary word processor. It has outstanding features like repeat change, and global change. It also allows keyboard Macros. This makes it possible for you to print the heading of a letter with just one keypress. Almost any sequence of keystrokes can be programmed as a Macro.

The most impressive characteristic of the 'ol Hackers is their enthusiasm. They still have that pioneering spirit that real hobbyists are made of! They make 8-Bitters feel less guilty hanging on to the software they have never grown tired of. If you have an exhaustive library of programs that took years to build, you're happy with the programs, and you use them every day, WHY SHOULD YOU GIVE THEM UP?

The ATARI SAFARI is a Classroom type of environment. The auditorium is divided into small sections. JACG members move from one section to the other, to view exhibits, and ask questions while the demonstration is taking place. This will take place at the June 11th meeting. Two ST users have come forward with contributions for the ATARI SAFARI. Ted Clancy will demonstrate music composition on the ST with music generated from a Guitar! Linda Peckham will demonstrate the new Publishing Professional!

For the 8-Bit users, Don Forbes has offered to demonstrate SYNCALC! We still need THREE more presentations for the ATARI SAFARI, and I hope we have good 16-Bit representation.

ATARI SAFARI IS COMING!

AND IT NEEDS YOU!

NOISE FROM NOYES

by Dave Noyes

Why a user group?

Simple question, isn't it? Most often, however, the question is posed as, "What is a user group?". Further, the "Why?" is more often than not, answered by the "What". Why do I appear to make a distinction between the two? Glad you asked...or I would have nothing to write about this month.

To me, the "What" indicates not just "What is a user group?", but "What's in it for me?". And when such a question is asked, one is immediately thrown on the defensive, often feeling the need to justify a user group. Over the past few months the "What" question has been posed by detractors who have attempted to question not only the efficacy of membership in the JACG, but also the necessity of its existence.

Necessity...notice how I got to the KEY word? That is the "Why". A group of Atarians meeting together, sharing and receiving. The club exists from the needs of the membership. As long as there is a need, there will be a club. As long as there are enough unselfish members available to provide those functions necessary for the operation of the JACG...there will be a JACG. Now honestly...isn't "Why" better than "What"?

LONG ISLAND MINIFEST

May 1, 1988 10am - 8pm

The LI ACE is sponsoring an Atari Minifest on Sunday, May 1. The show will be held at the Holiday Inn of Westbury, New York. Demonstrations of Desktop Publishing, Word Processing, Graphics & Animation will be held, and the club promises to have several vendors and software companies there. Directions to the show will be posted on the JACG BBS. For information from the LI ACE, call (516) 286-0706.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Submissions to the Newsletter should be in Atari writer or STWriter format, and uploaded to the Newsletter area of the BBS, or sent on a 5.25" disk to Dave Noyes. If you prefer to send Dave copy that is ready to be directly placed in the Newsletter, the copy should meet the following requirements: 0.5" left and right margins, two columns with a 0.5" central margin. The top and bottom margins should be 0.75 to 1.0". If you have an ST, and want to produce copy using Publishing Partner, then call Linda Peckham to obtain a copy of the Master Pages to be used.



This month I thought I'd cover a little byte or at least a nibble or two on what to do with all those really great picture files. You know, the ones that can be picked up on Compuserve, Genie and local and far away BBS's. Since I've been picking up quite a few RLE pictures lately, that is what I'm going to talk about. RLE stands for Run Length Encoded and is a machine-independent format for encoding monochromatic images.

* An RLE image file begins with a start sequence signaling the beginning of the picture, and indicating the type of image. There are two types of RLE pictures, denoted as medium and high resolution, respectively. Most are in high resolution except for certain weather maps. The start sequence is followed by pairs of ASCII characters representing binary numbers in excess notation. The first number of each pair indicates the number of pixels off; the second, the number of pixels on. The end of the image is signaled by a termination sequence.*

Whether the RLE file you have downloaded or received in some other fashion was originally created on a Mac, Amega, Tandy etc., from one of many different paint/drawing programs, you can use it on your Atari 8-bit machine. After having acquired your RLE picture files you will next want a program with which to view them. Two such programs come to mind; OMNILOAD.OBJ and RLESHW.OBJ. Both are public domain and should be readily available. OMNILOAD will only display pictures, but it does handle about 6 or 7 different types of picture files. Also you may have trouble displaying the new RLC files which are compressed RLE format. If you use control and i before the picture is finished plotting to the screen you can view the picture and solve the minor problem of having the screen erase with an error message. RLESHW on the other hand will only display RLE or RLC files, and has the added feature of being able to print them in two sizes to Prowriter (C. Itoh 8510) or Epson compatible printers (FX-80, RX-80, Star 56-10, NX-10 and others).

OK, Now that we have our RLE pictures and can view and print them, what do we do. Since it is impossible to use them or modify them in the format they are in (RLE), we convert them to a format easier to use. There are two programs out in public domain land that will do this. The first one carries the title RLECVT and is 54 single density sectors long. This one will convert from a VIDTEXT (RLE) file to a Graphics 8 file (63 sectors). You DO NOT want this one, as it is almost as hard to use a graphics 8 screen as it is an RLE screen. The program you do want is RLECONV which is 43 single density sectors long. You cannot mistake this file, as once you boot it up, it comes up with the NIGHT SHIFT BBS header. This program will do three conversions; 1. Koala to RLE, 2. Micropainter to RLE, 3. RLE to Micropainter. As you will see later, Koala and Micropainter formats are exactly what the doctor ordered.

The next step in our process of getting from here to there is to obtain the program called BBKART.COM (BBKARTIST). This program came out in either ANTIC or ANALOG a while back and is much more versatile than either Atari Artist or Microillustrator. The program will take input from Koala (Microillustrator) files, Micropainter files, and Magniprint files. It will only save files in the Koala compressed picture format tho. Besides the standard picture drawing options, you also have the option of adding text with BBKARTIST. Text is limited to 20 characters across. How many characters you can fit across on your picture depends on the size you chose. This varies from very very small (04) to extra large (99), height and width are independently adjustable.

Let me digress a moment here to give you one of the problem areas of converting RLE files. Since RLE files are monochrome picture files and the format we are converting them too has four colors, that is what you get, a monochrome picture file in four colors. This is not a problem if your final printed output is going to be in black and white. But if you intend to print in color you will have a lot of work to do. If you use the Nlarge option of BBKARTIST you will see that the color of each line is actually three colors; red, black and blue, with the background a light green. So you might want to recolor parts of the picture, or the whole thing.

Well I hope you are all keeping up and I haven't lost anybody yet, cause there is still lots to go before we can get to the 'there' part of this article. Another program, I'll just mention briefly, which you can use to add text is Design Master. It's also in the public domain. This program takes a little fooling around with to use, as I've never found a documentation file for it. It is for the XL/XE computers only and has the advantage of allowing different fonts and it has a printer dump. One of the disadvantages is that you will still have to use BBKARTIST as the text comes out in three colors.

Our next step in the chain is to use a program called RAPGRAPH.BAS (Rapid Graphics Converter by Charles Jackson). We want to convert our Koala format picture to Micropainter format. This program will convert between 10 different types of picture formats and is a handy one to have in your picture utility library. It is another that came out in either ANTIC or ANALOG.

Billboard is the next program we will use and it is available in the club library. It is a Basic program that will print a graphics 7+, 8, 9 screen from the size of a wallet photo to as large as a football field. The program comes with an extensive documentation file, which I suggest you at least glance through before you rush to do a printer dump. Although it doesn't say anywhere in the documentation anything about color printing, it is the only one I use out of the three I have.

To use Billboard for printing color pictures you have to be using either roll or fanfold paper. First align your paper, if you are using fanfold the tear line should be just at the top of your print head. Next mark a reference point on both sides of the sheet above the tear line. I hold the paper against the plastic tear bar and run a line across the paper with a fine marker. You will have to return to this line after each color you print. Depending on your printer, you may have to power it down to roll the paper back. Be very careful and consult your printer manual, as with some printers reverse rolling the paper with power on may cause damage to the feed gears.

Now when you select the PRINT option your picture will be displayed with a line on the bottom that says: 1-4=Up Color Reg. Tab=Default. Pressing any of the numbers 1 through 4 six times will rotate the color associated with it from off to full on. This will determine how dark the color will appear on your final printout. You will have to print the picture once for each color you are using. First insert the color ribbon for the first color and then cycle the numbers of the colors that you will not be printing this time to off. You should now have only the parts of the picture visible with the color you intend on printing. Print the picture following the instructions in the doc file.

After that color has stopped printing (DO NOT tear the paper off), reverse it, using the cautions above to the reference mark you drew before. Next select PRINT option again and change your ribbon to the next color to be printed. Using the 1 thru 4 keys again, set them up as before for the new color. A picture in three colors 22 X 28 inches will take a couple of hours to print.

The final step, if you are printing a large picture which uses several sheets of paper, is to break the paper into strips, trim and glue it together. The above picture took 8 sheets of paper, which broke down to four strips of two sheets each. If you don't either back your picture

with another sheet of paper or mount it on white poster board the seams will show. The best glue I have found to use is a glue stick called 'UHU STIC'. It is made in Germany and out of the several types I have tried is the only one that doesn't get mushy if you leave the cap off for more than 2 minutes.

Well thats it, we are finally to the 'there' part of the article. The whole process as you can see by the steps above takes time and a little planning. The above picture took about 4 hours from start to finish. If it was only a one page picture the total would have been around 2 hours.

Happy RLE converting and hope you have as much fun getting from here to there as I have. ---Neil--

\$.\$. This enclosed paragraph came from a file written by R.A. Gunter, CIS [70117,2565], entitled "Capturing VIDTEX Pictures".

QuikTips

Joe Kennedy - JACG

What's a "QuikTips"? That's a fair enough question to which the answer is simple - a "QuikTip" is something that I do with my 8-bit Atari that may or may not work for you. Goodness knows that this first one might not even be working for me.

Are you frustrated by the fact that since your 256K upgrade for your 800XL you spend what seems like an eternity waiting to reboot after you turned off the computer. Well it seems that if you put a cartridge in the slot and then turn on and turn off the computer you can then reboot with the disk drive as soon as remove the cartridge and turn on the computer. This only seems to work with cartridges that do not allow you to access the disk drive (i.e. the old carts like Tic Tac Toe or Soccer, etc.). Carts like Koalainter don't work here.

Does it work or not? I'm not sure whether it works for me because of some esoteric electronics law or because it simply uses up time 'til I can reboot. Whatever the case is when I'm done with the above procedure I can reboot from disk.

What are some of your "QuikTips"? This isn't a private column. It's open to one and all. Just jot down you quick tip on an Atari wordprocessor and send it to Dave Noyes for publication in QuikTips. I know he'll be eternally grateful. (But just remember that he's an editor and for editors eternity only lasts until the next issue.)

World Cup Manager

A Review

Joe Kennedy - JACG - Europe

'Seventeen minutes gone by

Denmark regains possession

Tehoumi is taken down by Butraguano

The ref awards Denmark a free
kick at the edge of the box

Maradona's kick dips under the bar

60000AAAAALLLL!!!

DENMARK HAVE SCORED

MARADONA SCORES FOR DENMARK

SCORE AFTER 18 MINUTES

ARGENTINA 0 DENMARK 1"

If the above seems a little strange then you are either a true soccer fan or else you know nothing about the sport. The above is a sample of what you see on your computer screen when you run "World Cup Manager" from S.T.V. Software (Henceforth known as WCM in this review.). For those true fans please don't let the fact that Maradona was playing for Denmark make you forget get about the program immediately. Read further and I'll explain how to prevent such a startling shift in nationalities.

WCM a simulation of the last World Cup soccer matches in Mexico City. It places you in the position as the manager of any of the 24 teams that took part in that series. First you get to select the team that you want to manage. The listing of the teams is from the best to the worst. The teams are broken up into six groups of four for the first round. Then you must select which four of the twenty-four you want full scouting reports on. These four will not necessarily be from your group; remember that you will be meeting the other teams in later rounds. That is if your team makes the later rounds.

In the course of the World Cup finals results are given every day so that you can follow your team as well as the progress of the others in the different groupings. On the days that your team plays you get a run down of the opposing team. If the opposition happens to be one of the four teams that you've been scouting you get a more complete picture of their tactics so that you can better

determine how your team should play that day. Then set back and enjoy the game. WCM is not a graphic simulation - like Infocom likes to say - the graphics are all in your mind. The play-by-play of the game scrolls up the screen in an easy to read fashion letting you know who has the ball and all the action on the field just like a good radio broadcast. (In fact it would be interesting to try to merge WCM with S.A.M. to really hear the games.) You can speed up the play-by-play; you can get the score and time remaining at any time so I guess that it is even better than radio. You can also make use of your one allowed substitution at any time but be careful, if you have an injury after you've used your sub you'll be playing a man short for the rest of the game.

After the first round, if your team has done a good job, you'll get into the second stage which has four groups of three teams each. You play two games in the second stage. The winners of each group in the second stage play together in the semi-finals and the winners in the semi-finals play in the final. If your team didn't qualify for the second stage you will see the results of the second stage in the same format as the daily reports for the first stage. The semi-final game(s) that you do not participate in are reported as excerpted highlights as is the final if you don't reach it.

I found the names a little disconcerting at first. Particularly since the author is British and no matter what team you pick you end up with the default team of British stars. (This also accounts for such peculiarities as "denmark have scored".) But you can change the players names to the proper ones (in fact with about five minutes more typing the author could have changed it also and made this good simulation even better) by typing in the names of the players for each team and saving them to a disk file (one for each team). This will of course mean a trip to the library to look up the names of the players. But don't stop there you can change the team names too! So why not impress the soccer buffs in your family by putting their team and them in the World Cup Finals. It is easy you just need to give the computer the names for twenty-four teams and the players names and let WCM take over.

I happen to like this program and would recommend it if you can find it. I have seen it advertised in the British magazines and would imagine that it would make its way to the States and probably at a discount price since the World Cup was almost two years ago now. I would really have liked it better though had the authors put in the players names for all the teams. Such laziness in programming for commercial sale is simply inexcusable, but don't let that stop you from getting World Cup Manager if you like a good simulation for your Atari. The address on the software package for S.T.V. Software is 9 Chiswick Road, Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham B37 6TA, England.

EXECUTIVE MEETING MINUTES

R.P.MULHEARN -JAC6 - Secretary

The meeting was called to order by the president at 8:00pm with Doug van Hook, Sam Cory, Dave Noyes, Bob Mulhearn, Linda Peckham, John Dean, and Gary Gorsky present and constituting a quorum.

The first item discussed was an overview of the April meeting and projected demos. This was followed by a finalization of plans for the April show. Linda and Bruce Middleman will be supplying 16-bit systems, with Doug and Bob supplying 8-bit systems. The 16-bit will run the MAC-SACK and Publishing Partner, along with various other programs. The 8 bit will sport various demos and a data base on which those interested can leave their name and address in order to receive more information.

The participation of 16-bit members both for demos at the meetings and for NEWSLETTER articles was discussed. It was decided to do our utmost to increase the level of 16-bit activity. With a view to this Doug proposed, and it was approved by all, to hold a NEWSLETTER contest consisting of a limit of 1 NEWSLETTER column (max) per contributor in the July NEWSLETTER. Judging to be during the August meeting by vote of the membership present. The prize to be a \$25.00 gift certificate for a member, or a 3rd class (mail) membership for a non-member.

It was decided to contact ATARI to attempt to get some informational flyers, and further, to come up with a form letter for notification to newspapers, etc., About our group.

The last item discussed was membership benefits, specifically, disk library prices. It was proposed and approved without dissent to adopt a new price schedule as follows:

For members:
Disk of the Month
8-bit \$1.00
16-bit \$2.00

regular disks
8-bit \$2.00
16-bit \$3.00

All mail-orders will be \$1.00 extra.

For all non-members disk prices will be \$5.00 per disk for both 8 and 16-bit. Mail order to be \$1.00 extra.

Members must present proof of membership (your membership card) to receive member prices. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30pm.

BUSINESS COMPUTING ON A SMALL SCALE

Jeffrey D'Ambrosia - JAC6

After a brief phone conversation with David Noyes, he suggested that the rest of the membership might be interested in how an Atari ST would be used in a computerized office running a small business, especially in conjunction with other machines of different types and manufacturers. Here in my office (with an office staff of one, me) there peacefully and productively co-exist three different types of computers, all working their little chips off, in very different ways.

The main machine is Kathy, my Kaypro 286i. It's an improved IBM AT clone with a 40 Meg harddrive, 2.6 megs of RAM, a 1.2 meg 5 1/4" floppy drive and a 3 1/2" 720kb floppy drive. EGA card and a NEC Multisync monitor handle the display. The next most powerful machine is Alex, the Atari 520 ST I'm writing this on. It has 1 meg of RAM thanks to an upgrade board, two dddd drives and a color monitor. Rounding out my office staff is Fifty Four, a Radio Shack 1400 LT laptop with 768Kb of RAM and two 720Kb floppy drives.

So why so many machines? Love, mostly. But for practical application in a business setting, multiple hardware equates to always being able to keep up with the paperwork, even if something breaks down. If one of the two printers breaks, output still continues. Data files can be updated using the same software even if the machine that software is used on goes down. In fact, the only software in use that has no hardware backup is Timelink, which is dedicated to the Atari ST. If Alex the Atari needs repair, then I'm in trouble.

So what is used for what? Well, Kathy the Kaypro 286i is the machine that most of the Database, Spreadsheet, and Word Processing takes place. It's fast and well laid out for efficient use. An AT class machine is a pleasure to work on after having used XT class machines. And EGA is much easier on the eyes than CGA. She's hooked up to a twenty four pin Epson 800 DM printer. Alex the Atari is used for scheduling and as my "Multitask Companion", running simultaneously with Kathy, allowing access to two programs at once, a real time saver. And with PC-DITTO, I can run MS-DOS programs, although much slower than an XT, allowing Alex to be a hardware backup to Kathy.

Finally, Fifty Four, the Radio Shack 1400 LT is used for direct sales calls on site, where a spreadsheet estimating sheet is used to give a customer an immediate quote. Since Fifty Four is battery powered, it is able to run right now, right here, with virtually no setup time.

Also, Fifty Four uses 3 1/2" disks, so it also serves as a backup hardware to Kathy. It also can be used as a "Multitask Companion", but Alex is better for that, since he has his own printer, a Okidata 92 with about five years service on it.

These machines represent the latest hardware I own, after a succession of machines starting with an Atari 400. The oldest equipment I still own is the Okidata 92 printer, a piece of hardware that, as far as I can tell, is indestructable. I have owned and used an Atari 800, a Kaypro 4 (CP/M), a Columbia XT clone(?!), and a Sharp PC 7000, besides my current stuff.

As an aside, I read Mr. George Schultz's letter in the February, 1988, issue of the JACG Newsletter, and I think some things bear comment regarding his feelings about Atari Corporation. First and foremost, a computer company is not in business to adopt buyers. It's in business to MAKE MONEY. Every decision, move, change, and action is predicated on that basis. Of the various machines I have owned, some became orphans (companies going out of business), some did not keep up with advancing technology (CP/M, 8 bit Atari), some did not allow for upgrading hardware (Sharp PC 7000), and basically none of them sold me something that was the last machine I ever had to buy. In fact, we all buy on the basis of what we need, what we can afford, and what will do the job. Essentially a compromise from the start, and never a "final solution".

In fairness, Mr. Schultz, comparing an eight bit Atari to an XT clone is not fair in terms of product time frame, or hardware capability. How about comparing the Atari product to an Apple of the same time frame. Why did Mr. Schultz buy Atari over Apple? Probably price/performance between the two favored Atari. The same reason I bought Atari ST over MacIntosh. It's certainly not a shock that more powerful hardware has come along, and that price performance ratios are improving. It is surprising that Mr. Schultz feels personally threatened by advancing technology. I wonder if he feels abandoned by IBM now that it has come out with the new PS/2 line, relegating all XT's and AT's to "old" technology.

And, if Mr. Schulz thinks that "vaporware" is only practiced by Atari, then I invite him to examine the balance of the computer industry, both hardware and software. It is a sad fact of life that virtually all companies pre-announce products, some of which never make it to market. It's not right, but it's not purely an Atari Corp. trait, either.

One point that Mr. Schultz makes that I agree with whole heartedly. Brand loyalty to a machine is not in the best interests of current owners, and that applies to all machines. Feeling pleased or satisfied about your choices in hardware and software is fine to a point. Becoming a

zealot, bashing opposing choices and turning a blind eye to shortcomings in your choices turns you into a fanatic, and easily victimized by the company(s) that you blindly support. A more logical approach says make 'em earn that support. Be critical and demanding. Whether for work or pleasure it's your money turning these companies into multi-million dollar behemoths. Force them to pay attention to all of us by remaining objective about their products. And don't worry about defending your choices to others who engage in "my stuff's better than yours". Good, Better, Best is the MOST subjective of all judgements. Even experts and professional don't agree, so let your decision be based on what it's doing for YOU!

HELP!!

A Plea

Joe Kennedy - JACG Europe

Help!Help! I can't get to the meetings in Murray Hill anymore to participate in the great Question and Answer periods before the meeting so I thought that I'd write to the JACG Newsletter with my question and address it to an even wider range of Atari experts.

Is there a DOS that will tell me what density a disk is formatted in without requiring me to copy it or do some other exotic maneuver?

That's it short sweet and waiting for an answer. I'll be happy to read the answer here in the JACG Newsletter or also if anyone cares to correspond you can write to me at:

Hoechster Str 2
D-4370 Marl
West Germany

Thanks, Joe.

NEWSLETTER CONTEST

The Board has agreed to have a NEW CONTEST for those of you who wish to write newsletter articles. Here's how it works:

Submit an article before June 20th. The article must be less than one column in length (about 400 words). The articles will be published in the JULY NEWSLETTER! In August, members in attendance will vote for the BEST ARTICLE OVERALL. If the winner is a member, he or she will receive a gift certificate in the amount of \$25.00. Non-Members will win one year's membership.

TIME LINK REVIEW

Jeffrey D'Ambrosia - JAC6

Time Link
Batteries Included
30 Murial St.
Richmond Hill, Ont. L4B 1B5

This is a brief review of Time Link by Batteries Included. The program integrates scheduling, appointments, and time analysis into a menu driven program with typical drop down menus. It is a port over from a MacIntosh, and because of greater hardware ability of the ST (!!!!), it has many added features. In the back of the manual, a summation of features is presented, and the Atari ST version is much improved over the Mac version. The program is not copy protected in any way, another definite plus.

I have been using Time Link in my business for several months, and it has proved to be the best scheduling tool I've ever used. As background, besides an ST, I also own and use in my home remodelling business a Kaypro 286i AT compatible and a Radio Shack 1400LT for sales calls. No IBM software in my experience compares to the features available in Time Link. Especially useful is the "find free time" command. You ask the program when in a range of times and dates when a block of time, say 45 minutes, is available. You can specify an individual as well. The program searches the open data file and gives you the first available time slot. Fast, too.

The program uses GEM well, almost all operations being point and click, and all entries are automatically saved to disk when the entry is complete. On my system with 1 meg of memory and two dsdd drives, saving was somewhat slow, so I set the program and data files in a RAM disk of 250Kb. The program takes about 80Kb, and a pretty detailed monthly appointment calendar takes about 20Kb. The whole program and data files easily fit on a ssdd disk (obviously!) and also operates on an Atari 520ST with no problem.

Printouts are a breeze, just hitting two OK boxes point and click and the current day's appointments are printed. There's a large amount of printer control in the second box, although you need to know your printer control codes, and most printers are supported. Printing periods of time is also very easy, just bracket the time period, and away goes the report.

The program has an excellent price/performance ratio, costing a list of \$49.95, and mail order pricing typically around \$26-\$27. Anyone with a large number of appointments, a busy personal schedule, and/or a need to keep track of their time will find this program a power packed tool for managing time.

TOS Incompatibilities

Paul Machiaverna - JAC6

TOS (Tramiel Operating System) on the Atari ST computers has seen many changes since the original disk based version released with the original 520ST machines back in 1985. Just like the transformation from the 8-bit's 400/800 operating system to the XL/XE operating system, where we have programs which are not compatible with both OS versions, TOS revisions have caused some programs to fail to run. There are some programs which need the original disk based TOS to run.

Here we are faced with a very frustrating dilemma. Most early ST users have installed the TOS in ROM to relieve approximately 200K bytes to memory for applications, but we are faced with some programs which refuse to run. To add insult to injury, the Mega ST TOS ROMs cause even further incompatibility problems. I use a Mega ST4 and have found that there are several programs which refuse to run with the Blitter enabled or disabled. This is probably due to the fact that programmers are always looking for ways to bypass 'legal' calls to the operating system for optimum speed. Well, there is a solution.

Somewhere in the TOS ROMs there is a routine which allows an operating system to be loaded from disk. Yes, you can still load the original TOS on disk into your ST machine which has the TOS on ROM. This means that you can still make use of the older operating system to run programs which do not run under the newer revisions. To load the disk based operating system all you have to do is use the old TOS disk as the boot disk. After the loading process, you will be presented with the old desktop. However, all early ST users will remember the colorful prompt on the screen asking us to insert the TOS disk to load the OS into the memory of the computer. You will NOT see this! You will go directly to the desktop. I only will use the old TOS on disk when I have a program which does not work on my machine otherwise.

TOS has improved with age (revisions) and many bugs have been corrected. The incompatibility problem lies within the software developers. Programmers love to find all sorts of ways to increase the speed of their programs. But, this can be fatal in future revisions to any operating system. Locations in memory can change, especially when they are not officially documented. Therefore, loading TOS from disk on a TOS in ROM machine can be a real help.



PDG-16

BY Linda Peckham

PROGRAMMERS' CONTEST

DISK OF THE MONTH: #86

Due to a mixup, in not receiving all of the 16-bit submissions, we were not able to see this disk last month. The disk will be available at this meeting. There were two 16-bit specific programs in the contest -- the Stock Market program by Eric Jacoves, and the Proprietary programs by Mr. Kobler.

Since there are only the two submissions, I am also adding the Long Island ACE demo program, which advertises their forthcoming minifest on May 1. The demo runs in medium resolution, and vertically scrolls five DEGAS pictures while playing a song through the speakers and MIDI port.

OTHER NEW DISKS

Thanks to John H. Dean, who has given the library the disks he bought from ST-Express' (PD) Archive. Some of these disks may show up, if I have time this week, otherwise, the ones added to the library will show up in May.

Thanks to my classes (midterm exams), I haven't had time to add anything to the library. Besides preparing for the show April 10, however, I do hope to add at least the following disk:

#100 PRINTMASTER DISK -- The exact contents of this disk are not set as of this article, but I have been downloading borders, fonts and icon files from GENie for a while now. The SPACE ST library included two disks of PM icons, but problems with the disks prevented them from being added.

LET'S HEAR IT FOR VOLUNTEERS!

At the last meeting, Andy Garber and Steve Newfield volunteered to test new PD programs submitted to the library. They should have gotten a disk or two from me by the time you read this, and we'll hopefully have any procedural problems worked out in a month or two. And Eric Jacoves has volunteered to help out with starting a PC-Ditto section for the library.

LIBRARY OPENING

However, more help is needed. Charlie Miller feels that he no longer has time to work on the

library, and would like to step down. He is willing to stay on until we have another person, since the job is too big for just me. What does the job entail? It involves preparing disks for the meeting (usually 40-50), labelling them, examining submitted programs to make sure they work and that they're worth adding to the library, and compiling new disks (that is, filling a disk with programs, usually of a certain type, such as games or utilities.) The new librarian will also need to show up at each meeting with the disks, and be at the table to sell them. The librarian needs a modem, to communicate to the JACG BBS (there's a section in the file area just for the librarians), and, preferably, should have a double-sided drive and one megabyte of memory. (It's not absolutely necessary, but programs will come in on DS and work only on a meg machine.)

Two floppy drives are probably essential, since there's generally a lot of copying back and forth between floppies, while compiling disks. I have both monitors, so it doesn't really matter which monitor the other librarian has.

Keep in mind, we're talking a lot of work. The librarians are not elected, but they probably contribute as much to the club as the officers. (Right, Sam? <grin>) So, are there any volunteers?

OOPS! (WE GOOFED!)

Andy Garber left a message to me on the BBS the other day, saying that his version of the STAR WARS CAD3D 2.0 animation refused to work on his machine. It turned out to be a mislabelled disk -- he ended up with the monochrome version, instead of the color. The goof probably was mine -- I suspect that I gave Charlie the two disks, wrongly labelled. If any of you have ended up with the same problems, bring your disks to the MAY meeting, and we'll exchange them for the proper program. I do apologize for any frustration the mixup may have caused. LP

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions to the library should be made on singlesided disks when possible. 10-sector formats are acceptable, but extended track formats should be avoided. We prefer programs which will run on 512K systems, color or mono. Documentation is preferred, and any requirements should be clearly noted. **COPY-RIGHTED SOFTWARE WHICH IS EITHER NOT SHAREWARE, OR NOT OWNED BY THE SUBMITTER, WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!**

MAIL ORDER

The disks may be ordered from the mail librarian. Include the number and title of the disks you want, and send \$5.00 per disk.

ST DISK LIBRARY LIST

VARIETY

- #86 JACO PROGRAMMERS' CONTEST (16 BIT)
- #93 COOKBOOK & KERMIT -- A cookbook program, KERMIT telecom., more.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- #96 TELECOMM DISK #1 [SPACE054] ST-TO-ST comm programs (with instr.), Flash Downloader, more.
- #93* KERMIT -- Upload/Download protocol, to communicate with VAX systems.
- #80 UNITERM 2.0. NOTE: Disk now contains 2.0 docs.
- #70D CITADEL BBS 3.1 (1 Meg req'd).

APPLICATIONS

- #83 BOWLING STATISTICS (for bowling teams)
- #82 BOWLING MANAGER (for bowling leagues)
- #60* PUBLISHING PARTNER DISK #4.
- #57 STWRITER. STWriter 1.75, 2.00 (GEM), docs, ARC.TTP
- #53 PUBLISHING PARTNER DISK #3.
- #51 FINANCIAL AIDES.
- #49 PM-TO-TS.
- #39 PUBLISHING PARTNER DISK #2.
- #38 PUBLISHING PARTNER DISK #1. Printer Drivers.
- #19 MICRO EMACS. EMACS text editor.

MUSIC

- #84 MUSIC PLAYERS: Music Studio & Music Cons.Set
- #73D DIGITIZED MUSIC 4: Hot Chocolate
- #56 SONG DISK #2. 42 Music Studio Songs
- #55 SONG DISK #1. 42 Music Studio Songs
- #50 MIDI MUSIC. CZVOICE, MIDI sequencer, Midisoft demo, 75 Music Studio Songs (ARC required)
- #42D DIGITEZED MUSIC 3: OXYGENE
- #41D DIGITIZED MUSIC 2: MATTMOOD
- #40D DIGITIZED MUSIC 1: FOREIGN AFFAIR

GRAPHICS

- #85 SPECTRUM DISK #2: Computer Eyes & DigiSpec
- #76 BEST OF GERMANY #2. (TNY)
- #75 BEST OF GERMANY #1. (TNY)
- #74D SILVER SPHERE (MONO)
- #72 ASTERIX
- #71 SPACE STATION (CAD 3D 2.0, COLOR)
- #69 STAR WARS COLOR. (CAD3D 2.0, COLOR)
- #68 STAR WARS MONO. (CAD 3D 2.0, MONO)
- #63 STAR TREK. (CAD3D 2.0, COLOR)
- #62 JUGGLER. The ST version of AMIGA's Juggler.
- #60* CLIP-ART DISK #3.
- #59 CLIP-ART DISK #2.
- #52 CLIP-ART DISK #1.
- #44 AEGIS ANIMATOR DEMO. (ARC'ed)
- #43D ANIMATION DISK
- #34 TINY DISK #5.
- #33 TINY DISK #4.
- #32 TINY DISK #3.
- #31 TINY DISK #2. 17 TINY pictures, nudes
- #30 TINY DISK #1.
- #28 SHINY BUBBLES. Animation from Xanth.
- #24 PENTAGON. CAD-3D (1.0)
- #7 GRAPHICS DEMOS. (1985 PROGRAMS)

UTILITIES

- #99 UTILITY DISK #6 [SPACE059] Disk cataloger, disk formatter, STARTGEM, MONOSHOW, more.
- #98 UTILITY DISK #5 [SPACE058] 1st Word utilities, compareres, more. BASIC req'd for some.
- #97 ACCESSORY DISK #2 [SPACE057] Calculators, disk formatter, Word400, WTERM, SUPERBOOT.
- #92 UTILITY DISK #4 [SPACE040] HD utilities, spell checker, labeller, ramdisk loader, more.
- #66 UTILITY DISK #3. DCOPY19.1, disk formatter, disk/file compressor, startup programs.
- #47 UTILITY DISK #2. ARC.TTP, ARC shells, address book, disk fixer, file hider, undeleter, sector editor, directory lister, more.
- #27 UTILITY DISK #1. Accessory loader and 5 accessories

GAMES

- #94 GAME DISK #11 [SPACE042] Dragon, LARN, Laser, Pong, Pool
- #90 GAME DISK #10 [SPACE026] An EAMON adventure, Football, ST_Agression.
- #89 GAME DISK #9 [SPACE024] Adventure-writer, and Flight Simulator scenario files.
- #79 EAMON. Adventure game, including two scenario files.
- #78 GAME DISK #7. Quiz, ST Invaders, Tunnel
- #77 GAME DISK #6. Wheel of Fortune 2.0, Wheel of Fortune Editor, Labyrinth
- #46 GAME DISK #5. Megaroids, Wheel of Fortune, Blackjack, Daleks, Azarian, slotmachine
- #45 PUZZLE PUZZLE. A great shareware monochrome game.
- #37 GAME DISK #4. MONOPOLY, Haunted House
- #36 GAME DISK #3. Checkers (acc & prg), maze of caves adv. game, Reversi.BAS, Flight Simulator situation file
- #35 GAME DISK #2. Colossal Cave Adventure, Daleks, Missile Command, Nightcrawlers, Ogre, solitaire poker, Startrek.bas
- #29 GAME DISK #1. Blackjack, clewso, Eliza, Joust (beta test), maze generator, mono pool game, Yahtzee, more.

LANGUAGES

- #95 ICON [SPACE043] A list-processing type language.
- #91 C SAMPLER #2 [SPACE027]
- #88 BASIC SAMPLER #2 [SPACE014]
- #87 LANGUAGE DISK [SPACE008] TinyBASIC, XLISP, Assembler
- #58 MARK JOHNSON'S C. A public domain C language.
- #48 PD FORTH. A public domain FORTH, version 1.1
- #9 LOGO SAMPLER. Simple LOGO programs
- #8 C SAMPLER. Simple C programs, includes source and run-time files.

EMULATORS

- #54 XFORMER. The 8-bit Emulator.
- #26 CP/M. The Emulator for CP/M (arc'ed, includes arc.ttp)

COMMERICAL DEMOS

- #67 ATHENA II. Demo version of a CAD program.
- #61 EASY-DRAW. Demo version of a drawing program.
- #50* MIDISOFT. MIDI Sequencer Demo (arc'ed)
- #17 ZOOMRACKS I. A database using a card-rack analog. By QUICKVIEW.
- #5 4X FORTH. Demo version of the FORTH language, by the DRAGON GROUP.

{ Disk numbers not listed above have either been removed from the library, or are in process of being reorganized and updated. * indicates that the disk is listed twice. D indicates that the disk is double-sided, and that one megabyte of memory is probably required. }

TO A REGIONAL MAGAZINE

By Linda Peckham

As those of you who have been attending the meetings know, we have been talking about the possibility of cooperating with other computer clubs, to create a regional Atari newsletter. Following is the letter I am sending out to the other Atari computer clubs in the area:

TO: Area New Jersey and New York clubs
FROM: J.A.C.G. (Jersey Atari Computer Group)

SUBJECT: Proposal for a Regional Atari User Group Magazine

The JACG would like to propose a joint effort by the area computer clubs to produce a regional Atari magazine. This magazine would be distributed to the participating clubs' members, and to those computer stores and bookstores which were willing to sell them. As part of this proposal, we would like to include the following points:

1. The magazine would be produced on an ST and a laser printer, possibly using one of the advanced desktop publishing programs. The intent would be to strive for a magazine with an appearance at least equal to Current Notes.
2. Expenses would be shared by the involved clubs on a pro-rata basis (per membership). Advertising would be sought to cover part of the expenses.
3. The first magazine would be brought out as a one-shot deal. If the clubs agreed that the issue was successful, the magazine could then be continued, at a frequency to be agreed upon at that time.
4. The magazine would contain "best of" articles from the different clubs' newsletters, reviews, and so on, perhaps divided into the following sections:
 - a. 8-bit section
 - b. 16-bit section
 - c. General Interest section
 - Club and BBS information
 - general computing or programming articles
 - list of local Atari dealers (?)
5. A small staff would be determined to oversee the magazine. The staff might consist of the following:
 - a. General Editor (in overall charge)
 - b. 8-bit Editor
 - c. 16-bit Editor
 - d. Sales and Advertising
 - e. Layout Editor (the person who does the final layout of the magazine; presumably someone with an ST and access to the aforementioned laser printer)
6. BBS's and GENie would be used as much as possible to pass along information and articles between groups.
7. Depending on how long it took to get organized, the magazine should be out no later than mid-late October, to catch the Christmas shopping season.

Several people from different computer clubs have already expressed interest. If your club is interested, then leave a note on GENie, Compuserve, or the JACG BBS (201-298-0161).

Signed,

ST VIRUS

Paul Machiaverna - JACG BBS

The Computer Viruses are here

According to the April 1988 issue of ST Applications, one of the computer viruses has hit our shores from Germany. Only a virus for the Atari ST computers is discussed in the article. In the accompanying disk, a short program is included to check for the virus in your computer. If you are not sure what a computer virus is, read on...

Years ago we were warned that there were programs out in the public domain world which could wipe out an entire floppy disk or hard disk. The programs would be given names and descriptions which would have nothing to do with its true function; wipe out your data. For example, you get a program which is described as being a graphics demo. You, innocently, run the program and you realize that something is wrong; your disk drive is erasing the disk! If you have a hard drive installed you can kiss a lot of data away in seconds. This type of programs had many names like worms, trojan horses, etc. Enter the computer virus.

A computer virus is a little different, much more sneaky. Instead of wiping out your data immediately, it does it little by little. Like the biological virus, it grows! If you run a program with a virus installed it will seem to work as described and you will think nothing of it. But, the virus is installed in the memory of your computer and on the available disk drives. As time passes the virus will grow and slowly but surely wipe out many long hours of work and data. The only way to get rid of the virus is to turn off your computer and back on (a cold start. Reset won't do it!). But, it isn't that easy. Since the virus is installed on any and all disks that are available you will have the virus in your disk library, waiting to destroy.

What do you do? A few things.

1) Try to get a copy of a program which actually looks for a virus in your computer and disks. Sorry, at this time the only one I know of is on the disk of the April 1988 ST Applications magazine.

2) Whenever you get a public domain program from a bulletin board or by disk check the file out with your hard drive OFF and only use the floppy which contains the newly obtained program. Check the program out. Do you notice random accessing of the disk drive? Does the program do what it was described as? Go back and forth from the program and the desktop a couple of times. Do you notice the free space on the disk or file lengths changing? Even if these tests check out you still cannot be 100% sure.

3) If you find out who is distributing or writting a virus, KICK THE LIVING \$\$ OUT OF THEM!!!! Let's face it, people who like these type of jokes are sick individuals. They like to see other people suffer loses and are mentally ill.

4) Please report any findings on viruses to the club as soon as possible. This way we won't have to suffer any memory losses.

The Joys of Joysticks Revisited

Joe Kennedy - JACG

What seems like eons ago in one of the first articles I wrote for the JACG Newsletter (Gee! Don't you think we need a name other than the "JACG Newsletter"?) I discussed various types of joysticks. Well I've found another that I think is pretty good and I'd like to let you know about it. It's called the "Micro-Haendler" Multi-Function Joystick. (By the way that funny "ae" actually stands for an "umlaut a". You know - an "a" with two little dots over it.)

I want to say up front that the M-H (Micro-Haendler) is more than the name implies. It is also two paddle controllers as well as a joystick. The M-H is controlled by four microswitches instead of the standard bubble switches of the normal paddles. It also has a rapid fire option with a variable speed control to determine the rate of fire.

The footprint of the M-H is 12x19.5cm (4.75x7.75in.). The box height is 4cm (1.5in.) and the joystick proper stands 5cm (2in.) above the box. The box itself is black metal with white lettering to indicate the various functions. The joystick stands on the right side and the two large fire buttons on the left side. The joystick is a metal rod topped by a red knob. The fire buttons are yellow. In the middle on the left are the two paddle controllers. On the right are the selector switches for paddle or joystick and for normal or rapid fire as well as the dial for the speed of fire if the rapid fire option is selected. The paddle controllers as well as the fire speed controls are metal dials. On the right is also a red LED that indicates when the fire button is activated - either manually or automatically.

While it is obvious from the description (At least I hope it is!) that the M-H is not a hand held joystick, it is very stable and the four large suction cup feet hold it firmly in place next to your computer. Unfortunately I found a very good use for the M-H. As you may have heard, in early November I broke my hand - the right one of

course - which made using a normal joystick somewhat difficult. However with the M-H I was still able to win at Ballblazer. All is not roses however. The paddle placement makes the use of two paddles difficult at best. As one set of two paddles for one person it is ideal. For two people - only those with extremely tiny hands.

With that said, the M-H is all-in-all a good product. It is extremely well made and solid. It is a metal case with metal controls and comes with a connector cable that is longer than most. Now for the catch I don't know if the Micro-Haendler is available in the US. In Europe it lists and sells for 49 Dmarks which used to be about \$25 dollars but today is somewhat more than \$25. I wish I could tell you what the name of the manufacturer is but in a monumental marketing blunder the manufacturer of this fine instrument has neglected to put his name or address on the packaging. The M-H is available in most computer stores and departments in Europe so that you just need to make a quick hop over the ocean if you need one.

Just a quick request. If there is any particular interest in some area of Atari computing in Europe let me know and I'll try to follow-up on it for a future article. So long.

ATARI SAFARI IS COMING!

AND IT NEEDS YOU!

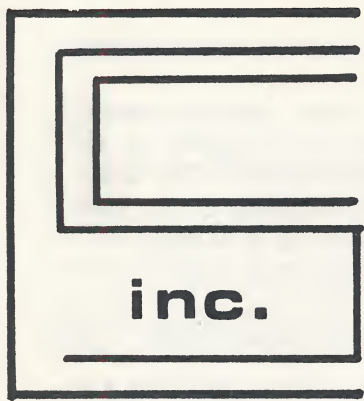
On June 11, the JACG will hold its Annual Atari Safari at the AT&T Labs Auditorium -- four to six demonstrations going on at once! It promises to be an exiting morning -- *but!!* -- only with your help and participation. Volunteers are needed now for demonstrations! If you're willing to show off your favorite software, then contact Doug Van Hook. But do it soon -- we've only so many spots open, and once they're gone, they're gone!



HACKER'S CONTEST

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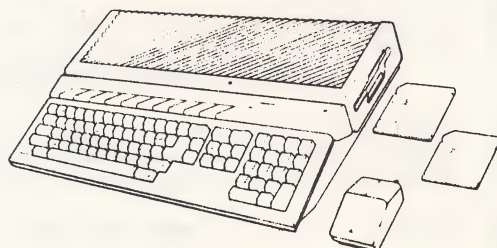
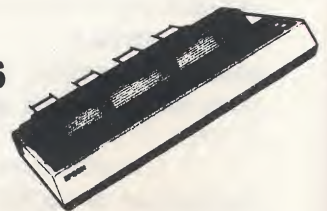
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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Take a moment and look at your mailing label on a recent issue of the JACG Newsletter. Check the upper right hand corner. This is the month/year when your membership expires. Try to renew at least one month early. This helps us keep our bookkeeping in order and avoids your missing any issues of the Newsletter.

There are two easy ways to renew:

1. Fill out a membership renewal form in the front lobby before our monthly meeting and present it with \$25 (in cash or check) to the Treasurer. Add \$6 for first class mailing of the Newsletter.

2. Copy the information on your mailing label and send, with your remittance to the address listed above.

CHECK YOUR LABEL TODAY!!!

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISEMENTS

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How would you like to reach a targeted audience of over 700 ATARI computer users? This newsletter has a press run of 800 per month, is read by members and non-members alike, and is sent to over 60 other ATARI User Groups across the U.S. and in several other countries.

Advertising is available on a first-come and space-available basis. Camera-ready copy, accompanied by payment, must reach the Editor by the 20th day of the month preceding publication. JACG reserves the right to make decisions concerning the placement of ads within the Newsletter and editing or rejecting advertisements deemed unsuitable.

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APRIL 1988

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TREASURER

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SAM CORY
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Towaco, NJ 07082
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VICE PRESIDENT, 8 BIT

JOHN N. DEAN
RFD #2 Box 788
Sussex, NJ 07461
201-827-2460 (business)
201-827-3902 (home)

EDITOR

DAVID B. NOYES
3 Ann Road
Long Valley, NJ 07853
201-852-3165

PRESIDENT EMERITUS

THOMAS PAZEL
70 Mitchell Road. T-7
Hackettstown, NJ 07840
201-850-9017

BBS SYSOPS

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